

Agency Secure Image and Storage Tracking (ASIST) & File Standardization Guide

A Filing Guide for AORs/CORs

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2. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Agency for International Development has instituted an electronic filing system for all Acquisitions & Assistance (A&A) actions, following the policy in [ADS 502, The USAID Records Management Program](#). This guide includes procedures and uniform file standards for the official documentation of AOR/COR files.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) policy does not allow for awards to be filed partially in ASIST and as a paper file. Therefore, awards issued prior to the effective date of the ADS 302 and ADS 303 revisions announcing the mandatory use of ASIST for AOR/COR award administration files can continue to be filed according to the paper-based procedures previously in use. However, a Mission/Operating Unit (OU) may decide to transfer hard copy AOR/COR administration files of existing awards (**in their entirety**) into ASIST. ASIST will only allow for the creation of AOR/COR files if the corresponding A&A award is in ASIST (mandate is April 3, 2014 to require A&A awards in ASIST).

3. ELECTRONIC FILING GUIDANCE

3.1. Applicability

Electronic filing in ASIST is applicable to:

All AORs/CORs of new awards. The AOR/COR Designation Letters require the use of Agency Secure Image and Storage Tracking/Acquisition and Assistance Document Management (ASIST) system to maintain the official AOR/COR award file in its entirety. The A&A award must be filed in ASIST in its entirety before the AOR/COR uploads their documents.

ASIST has been enhanced to serve as the Agency's official, electronically-based AOR/COR record repository. ASIST now automatically creates a AOR/COR folder and notifies AORs/CORs when they are designated in GLAAS.

The AOR/COR award file must be organized in accordance with the new uniform ASIST Filing Standard found in ASIST and Appendix A.1. This structure identifies mandatory documents that are required for a complete official Government AOR/COR file.

3.2. Roles and Responsibilities

3.2.1. Supervisory Contracting/Agreement Officers (SCO/SAO)

The SCO/SAO is required to implement this electronic filing system and recommend that all AORs/CORs have access and receive training in ASIST (see Section 3.7).

3.2.2. Cognizant Contracting/Agreement Officer (CO/AO)

The CO/AO must verify that all award documents are properly filed in ASIST prior to signing/executing any award or modification. The CO/AO must then ensure that all final signed documents are properly filed. The CO/AO is not responsible for the AOR/COR files.

The CO/AO designates the AOR/COR in GLAAS and issues a designation letter which is finalized and filed in ASIST. The CO/AO is responsible for providing approvals for staff that the AOR/COR needs to grant permissions to the file for assistance in loading documents.

3.2.3 Agreement Officer/Contracting Representative (AOR/COR)

The AOR/COR is responsible for complying with this guide and maintaining their files in ASIST per their designation letter. The AOR/COR must then ensure that all final signed documents are properly filed

3.3. Certification that Documents in ASIST are in “Final Form”/Signed Documents

When a document is uploaded into ASIST, the Agency accepts this as a certification by the document filer that the documentation is in final form with original signatures, and it becomes part of the official record. AORs/CORs must not upload draft documents into ASIST; only final documents in must be uploaded into ASIST.

Documents housed within other Agency enterprise systems, such as GLAAS, do not meet the official record-keeping requirements. Only ASIST-loaded documentation is considered an official record.

Signed Documents: When documents received that include signatures from the recipient/contractor and/or the AO/CO, the entire original hard copy document, including the signature page, must be scanned into a PDF file and uploaded into ASIST. In the case of documents containing a signature, the signature page must be received hard copy before they are scanned and uploaded into ASIST. While interim facsimile or emailed signature pages can be used for executing an award, they are not currently authorized as the official version for uploading into ASIST. AORs/CORs must make reasonable efforts to verify the authenticity of the electronic content and sender before uploading the document into ASIST. Please see [ADS 502.3.4.3 Converting Paper Records to Electronic](#) for more information.

After a hard copy document has been uploaded to ASIST, AOR/CORs must dispose of the hard copy using Agency burn-bags or a shredder.

3.4. A&A File Standards and Other Support Documents

3.4.1. A&A File Standard Categories

A&A File Standards govern where a given award document is placed electronically within ASIST for purposes of official Agency record-keeping.

A&A File Standard sections in ASIST are designed to serve as a guide on elements in key phases of the award process and to facilitate uniform electronic filing of documents. These are two broad categories designed to capture various award types that AORs/CORs may be assigned designation letters as shown the table below.

<u>Award Type</u>	<u>ASIST Filing Standard Format for AORs/CORs</u>
All Contracts (including IDIQs)	Contract
Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA)	Contract
Task Orders (issued under Agency IDIQs and other Government-wide Acquisition Contracts such as GSA Schedules)	Contract
BPA Orders	Contract
Grants, Cooperative Agreements Leader/Associate Awards	Assistance
Public International Organizations (PIO) Awards*	Assistance
Interagency Agreements*	Assistance

*only if award requires an AOR

The file formats can be located in Appendix A.1.

3.5. Working in ASIST

3.5.1. Uploading Documents

The AOR/COR designated in GLAAS and in the designation letter requiring the filing of documents in ASIST will receive a notification from ASIST that their administration file is available and documents can now be uploaded to it. The AOR/COR will upload documents required in ASIST. Filing is made easier since the system has cross references from the AOR/COR to the A&A file for the below three documents that the AO/CO has already uploaded. For example, the AOR/COR will not need to upload these three documents:

- (1) Award
- (2) Modifications

(3) AOR/COR Designation letter

Other cross references to the FM files are also indicated in the AOR/COR file (See Appendix A.1 for further details) where the AOR/COR does not need to upload again. This will help avoid duplicative efforts and confusion for locating final documents.

If the AOR/COR decides to upload prior existing awards in ASIST and/or has a designation letter requiring the use of ASIST and did not receive the above email containing their assigned folder, follow the steps below:

- Search for the award number in ASIST and if the award is not accessible, contact your CO/AO.
- Once the award number appears in ASIST, create the AOR/COR folder (the folder must have a correlated A&A file award number).

If ASIST does not contain a subsection within the pre- or post-award file sections for a document, the AOR/COR must file the document within the subsection "Other."

With the exception of signature documents (see Section 3.3 Signed Documents), AOR/CORs are strongly encouraged to upload documents as MS Word compatible versions and upload budgets as Excel spreadsheets. This will facilitate searches within the ASIST system.

When naming documents in ASIST, AOR/COR are required to follow the Naming Convention Guidance, Appendix D.

3.5.2. File Access Restrictions

At the post-award stage, the AOR/COR may grant access to the ASIST file to other personnel with the AO/CO approval, as necessary for administration of the award. ASIST allows the AOR/COR to grant permission to their files to the CO/AO, as needed.

3.6. Post-Award File Assessment

All Washington and Mission ASIST AOR/COR files are subject to official Agency Acquisition and Assistance procurement system reviews by the Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance – Evaluation Division (M/OAA/E). As part of the procurement system review, M/OAA/E will access ASIST records in the post-award stage remotely. Assessment findings are reported to the Senior Procurement Executive with recommendations.

Other duly authorized offices or individuals may be tasked to conduct electronic file reviews as part of an official function (e.g., OIG audits). Post award assessments may also result from Agency management initiatives.

3.7. Training & Access

At a minimum AOR/CORs are strongly encouraged to take the online training prior to using ASIST. Online basic training is available and other tools can be found at the [ASIST home page](#).

All AOR/COR who do not already have access to ASIST may contact the CIO Help Desk at cio-helpdesk@usaid.gov. For technical difficulties, including trouble accessing the system, please contact the CIO Help Desk.

4. PAPER-BASED FILING GUIDANCE

4.1. Applicability

All awards issued prior to the effective date of the ADS 302 and ADS 303 revisions announcing the mandatory use of ASIST for AOR/COR award administration files, can continue to have AOR/COR files maintained in the paper-based format in use at USAID/Washington and in overseas Missions.

The AOR/COR may elect at any time to transfer an entire file and follow the Section 3, Electronic Filing Guidance. If the CO/AO chooses to transfer the documents into the electronic file format, the entire file must be scanned into ASIST; no partial filing is authorized.

APPENDICES

4.2. Appendix A.1 – ASIST Filing Standard for AORs/CORs see ([ASIST home page](#)).

4.3. Appendix D – Naming Convention Guidance (see [ASIST home page](#)).